

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



PATRICIA McMANAMAN
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YAMASHITA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

February 12, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mele Carroll, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 1039 – RELATING TO FOSTER CARE**

Hearing: Thursday, February 14, 2013; 9:30 A.M.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of H.B. 1039 is to allow former foster youth, who are attending an institution of higher education as a full-time student, to stay in the foster care system until the age of 23.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services appreciates the intent of this bill but does not believe it is necessary. Former foster youth who are attending institutions of higher learning are already receiving financial and health benefits from the State and the federal government.

Currently, when a foster youth exits foster care and is enrolled in an institution of higher learning, the youth is eligible to receive State-funded \$529 monthly allowance (Higher Education Payment) until the youth reaches age 27. This payment may be used by the youth for housing, food or other basic necessities.

Also, former foster youth who are enrolled in higher education are eligible for federally-funded Education and Training Vouchers (EN) which provide up to \$5,000 per year until age 23. This money may be used to cover essential costs of going to school, including housing, food, transportation, child care, books, and computers. There are also scholarships, grants, and loans that former foster youth are eligible for to assist in defraying the costs of attending institutions of higher education (e.g. Geist Scholarships and Pell Grants).

Through CWS and its purchase of service contracts, the Department currently offers Independent Living Services to foster youth and former foster youth ages 12 – 26, which includes transition planning, case management, and Youth Circles. These comprehensive services are made available to former foster youth regardless of their enrollment in school.

For medical coverage, former foster youth will be covered fully by the QUEST program up to age 26, pending approval by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Approval is expected within the next several months.

The Department opposes the amending of Section 346-16 to redefine "former foster youth" with age specification. The Department believes that any child who aged-out while in foster care is considered a "former foster youth" regardless of current age; it is therefore unnecessary to extend the age limit to age 23.

The Department opposes the amending of 587A-4 to redefine "child" with age specification to include age 23. The Department does not believe that reports of child abuse/neglect in 587A should include reports about children who are legally adults (18 – 23). Also, with its current staffing, the Department will not be able to manage the intakes or caseload of children up to age 23.

The Department of Human Services respectfully requests that the Legislature consider H.B. 873, an Administration bill that proposes to add a new part to chapter 346,

Also, former foster youth who are enrolled in higher education are eligible for federally-funded Education and Training Vouchers (EN) which provide up to \$5,000 per year until age 23. This money may be used to cover essential costs of going to school, including housing, food, transportation, child care, books, and computers. There are also scholarships, grants, and loans that former foster youth are eligible for to assist in defraying the costs of attending institutions of higher education (e.g. Geist Scholarships and Pell Grants).

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The Department of Human Services respectfully requests that the Legislature consider H.B. 873, an Administration bill that proposes to add a new part to chapter 346,

Hawaii Revised Statutes, to establish a new program called the young adult voluntary foster care program. The young adult voluntary foster care program will support former foster youth in achieving permanency in the transition to adulthood and in becoming independent and self-sufficient by extending voluntary foster care to age 21.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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Bay Clinic, Inc.
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu
Big Island Substance Abuse Council
Blueprint for Change
Bobby Benson Center
Catholic Charities Hawaii
Child and Family Service
Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii
Domestic Violence Action Center
EPIC, Inc.
Family Support Hawaii
Hale Kipa, Inc.
Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.
Hawaii Behavioral Health
Hawaii Student Television
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition
Hina Mauka Teen Care
Hui Malama Learning Center
Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health
KEY (Kualoa-Heeia Ecumenical Youth)
Project
Kids Hurt Too
Kokua Kalihi Valley
Life Foundation
Marimed Foundation
Maui Youth and Family Services
Palama Settlement
P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together (PACT)
Planned Parenthood of Hawaii
REAL
Salvation Army Family Intervention Svcs.
Salvation Army Family Treatment Svcs.
Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community Center
The Catalyst Group
The Children's Alliance of Hawaii
Waikiki Health Center
Women Helping Women
YWCA of Kauai

February 11, 2013

To: Representative Mele Carroll, Chair,
And members of the Committee on Human Services

Testimony in Support of the Intent of HB 1039 Relating to Foster Care

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports the intent of HB 1039 Relating to Foster Care.

HYSN prefers HB 873 Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act because it allows a broader group of foster youth the option of remaining in care to age 21. In addition to youth enrolled in college, this bill extends eligibility to youth who are enrolled in vocational training programs, those working 80 hours a month or more, and those who are incapable of participating in college/vocational programs or employment.

Young people who age out of foster care at age 18 face significant challenges. The Midwest Evaluation of Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth showed that by age 24:

- 40% of young people had been homeless since leaving foster care;
- 1/4 did not have a high school diploma (compared to 7.35% of peers who did not experience foster care);
- Half were unemployed (twice as high as the general young adult population);
- 81% of males had been arrested (compared to 17% of all young adults);

Outcomes are much better for young people who stay in care to age 21 (from Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Issue Brief - :

- Those required to leave care at age 18 were 2.7 times more likely to have been homeless;

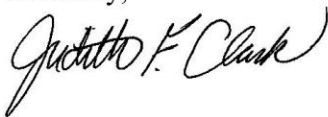
- Remaining in care more than doubled the odds that young people would be working or in school at age 19;
- Those remaining in care were twice as likely to have completed at least one year of college by age 21;
- Young women remaining in care experienced a 38% reduction in the incidence of pregnancy before age 20;
- Those remaining in care were more likely to access independent living services.

Extending foster care to age 21 has financial benefits for both the young adult and society. Increasing opportunities to complete college and vocational programs results in higher earning potential over a lifetime. Extended foster care decreases costs to society from early child bearing as teen mothers are 2.2 times more likely to have a child placed in foster care than those who delay child bearing until age 20 or 21.

Most young people are not prepared to take on all of the responsibilities of adult living at age 18. Our youth in foster care deserve this support in making successful transitions to adulthood.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director

kobayashi1-Joni

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 12:39 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: jlee16@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1039 on Feb 14, 2013 09:30AM*

HB1039

Submitted on: 2/12/2013

Testimony for HUS on Feb 14, 2013 09:30AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jenny Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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To: House Committee on Human Services, Rep. Mele Carroll, Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, and committee members

Hearing Date: February 14, 2013

Time: 9:30am

Place: Conference Room 329, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

From: Brandon Tomlin,

MSW Student at University of Hawaii Manoa, Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work

RE: Support for HB1039

Hello Chair Carroll, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and committee members. My name is Brandon Tomlin and I support HB1039. Before coming to Hawaii I worked with foster and adoptive youth in Oakland California. While there, California Assembly Bill 12 was passed to extend of foster benefits up to age 21 for youths and young adults seeking continued education. I saw the positive effects of this bill first hand with some of my clients. By having consistent supportive adults in their lives, several of the youths I worked with were able to begin higher education courses and successfully navigate the application, financial aid, and social aspects of school. These young adults all reported the importance of having continued support from their caregivers and families in the foster system.

I am very lucky to come from an intact home where both of my parents gave their support – financial and emotional – while I attended my undergraduate education. The increasing responsibility of young adulthood is no easy task even with ample support. Budgeting money, choosing roommates, making new friends, and juggling social events with schoolwork takes some trial and error. Without the support of my parents, I would not have had the external

perspective I needed to focus on my classes and schoolwork. My parents were essential components to my success and helped me graduate in four years.

The direct support given by caregivers and families can be immediately felt and there are many long-term benefits of equal importance. By offering the extension to foster benefits, youth can strengthen the bonds with their caregivers and families in order to help promote permanent relationships that last well beyond age 23. According to 2010 data from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) 84 youth in Hawaii aged out of the system. HB1039 would give those 84 young adults – and many more in the future - access to the support and guidance that will help propel them to reach their maximum potential. I strongly endorse this bill and ask you to consider the positive impact this can have on hundreds of Hawaii youth in the years to come. Thank you for your time and for considering this significant legislation.

Sincerely,

Brandon Tomlin